

Remarks by Dr. James C. Fletcher  
Reception for OAU Ambassadors  
May 22, 1972

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration are pleased and honored at having been invited to this celebration -- the ninth anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity.

Our organization, NASA, is quite young in years -- not unlike your Organization of African Unity. And I think we are alike in another respect: these beginning years have been filled with great challenges and great accomplishments -- not just for one nation, but for many.

As you know, a number of our astronauts have visited the African continent.

Gemini astronauts L. Gordon Cooper and Charles Conrad visited Ethiopia, the Malagasy Republic, Kenya, and Nigeria, in September 1965.

The Apollo 11 crew -- Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Edwin Aldrin -- visited Zaire in September 1969.

The Apollo 12 crew -- Charles Conrad, Richard Gordon and Alan Bean -- visited Morocco, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Malagasy Republic, in March 1970.

In all those visits, our astronauts were most impressed with the warmth and friendliness with which they were greeted. What they commented upon most of all was the fact that people in Africa, and indeed, all over the world, told them of their emotional involvement in their missions -- a sense of real participation. Through the miracle of space age communications, they were able to feel a part of these historic events -- as indeed they were.

emotional -  
involvement

We at NASA profoundly believe that these communications -- most recently in the form of INTELSAT, with which of course you are all quite familiar -- are helping to bring the world closer together. When we build and launch a communications satellite, it is an American product. But once it is placed in orbit, it becomes truly international -- it belongs to all the world. And the countries of Africa participate with all the other nations of the world.

communications  
bringing  
world  
together

Weather satellites are, of course, another case in point. African States as well as other States throughout the world benefit from this system, in which the weather satellites are interrogated to obtain up to the minute global weather information.

It is our earnest hope that space science and exploration will keep bringing more and more benefits to all the world in the years ahead. Next month, according to present plans, we expect to launch a satellite specifically designed to survey earth resources from space. Other more sophisticated satellites will follow, designed to collect information on crops, forests, water, and a host of

benefits  
to all  
the  
world

other resources basic to the welfare of mankind. As you probably already know, we have had a number of specific proposals from African States for the acquisition and use of data from this first Earth Resources Program.

With me here this evening is Astronaut Fred Haise. As I am sure you know, he was a crew member on the Apollo 13 mission -- a mission which flew around the Moon, although it did not succeed in landing. That mission demonstrated the ability of men to overcome tremendous difficulties, and to return safely after circumstances that could easily have ended in tragedy. That mission, perhaps more than all the others which were accomplished more routinely, also showed us how involved human beings all over the world had become with the space program.

intro  
Fred  
Haise

He is here this evening representing the entire corps of our astronauts.

Mr. Fred Haise.